

Washington, DC – Today, I join my colleagues from the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in celebrating Black History Month. For centuries, African Americans have made important contributions to our nation – from Langston Hughes to W.E.B. Dubois to Frederick Douglas to Malcolm X.

More importantly, Black History Month is a time to reflect on our nation's struggles to overcome discrimination and inequality, while we remember and honor those who fought tirelessly to achieve the dream of 'equality and justice for all.'

As a third generation Japanese American and the Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I am grateful to those like Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, and the Freedom Riders who stood strong to fight the injustice so all Americans today can enjoy the civil rights promised in the Constitution.

Although our country has made great strides in civil rights and race relations, America must make further strides. Civil rights in the 21st century involve eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities so that all Americans have access to quality affordable health care, allowing equal access to jobs and capital, and ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to own their own home and their own business.

We must continue to educate one another and work with one another on the ongoing struggle to ensure equal rights for all Americans. As Americans, we have much more to achieve as a nation to ensure that our children will have a future free of national bias, race, and religious prejudice.